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Proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Programme 11
Human settlements

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Overall orientation

11.1 The overall purpose of the programme is to improve the living and working environment for all through more effective, participatory and transparent management and development of human settlements, within the overall objective of the reduction of urban poverty and social exclusion. The main mandate is provided by the Global Plan of Action of the Habitat Agenda and by relevant resolutions of the General Assembly (most recently resolutions 53/242 and 54/209) and of the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventeenth session. The programme is under the intergovernmental guidance of the Commission on Human Settlements, which reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

11.2 The strategy of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat) will be organized around two subprogrammes corresponding to the two main themes of the Habitat II Conference and the Habitat Agenda: "Adequate Shelter for All" and "Sustainable Urban Development". Each subprogramme will initially be spearheaded by a global campaign, i.e., the Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Campaign on Urban Governance, respectively, which will combine normative and operational activities. Policy advice, capacity-building, legislative action, advocacy, and public awareness-building will be the main work methods.

11.3 Within the Secretariat, the overall responsibility for the programme is vested in UNCHS (Habitat). The Centre will serve as the focal point for the implementation of the programme within the United Nations system and will work in coordination with the programmes of, among others, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Subprogramme 1
Shelter for all

11.4 Shelter conditions for the world's urban poor have continued to deteriorate, compounding a cycle of poverty and marginalization. Central to resolving the shelter challenge is replacing policies based on social and physical exclusion with the benefits of formally acknowledging the right of the poor to urban shelter and services. The benefits both to the recipients and surrounding communities will demonstrate the sustainability of this approach.

Objective

11.5 The overall objective of the subprogramme is to improve shelter conditions of the world's urban poor, particularly in developing countries.

Strategy

11.6 The responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Shelter Branch. The subprogramme strategy will be to use, as its entry point, a rights-based Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, in which the main activity of Habitat will be to promote, globally, relevant norms and standards, to provide specialized substantive support to Member States, and to capture the normative lessons learned and devise appropriate mechanisms for their assimilation, analysis and dissemination. Other elements of the strategy include support for the mobilization of finance and credit, better shelter delivery mechanisms, improved provision of urban infrastructure and effective monitoring of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. A particular feature of the strategy will be a focus on the role of women as active participants, at the national and local levels, in the efforts to improve their shelter conditions and those of their families.

Expected accomplishments

11.7 Expected accomplishments would include:

(a) Improved tenurial rights;

(b) Larger volumes of finance and credit for low-income human settlements development,

especially for the housing sector, and access to these funds by larger numbers of low-income populations;

(c) Higher quality and more reliable urban infrastructure, especially clean water, sanitation, community health systems, waste management and transport for larger numbers of people.

Indicators of achievement

11.8 Indicators would include:

(a) Number of countries (i) adopting national legislation for the granting and protection of secure tenure; (ii) recognizing women's tenurial rights, including inheritance rights; (iii) introducing policies and procedures for more open and affordable land markets; and (iv) introducing measures/policies to reduce forced evictions;

(b) Number of countries (i) establishing effective non-traditional financing arrangements; (ii) adopting measures to improve access to credit in the housing sector, including enhanced role for women; and (iii) making available non-mortgage forms of housing credit;

(c) Number of effective and sustainable shelter delivery systems established; and increase in the utilization of energy-efficient construction materials and methods;

(d) Number of (i) urban poor communities having access to potable water; (ii) slum-upgrading programmes established; and (iii) equitable pricing policies for basic and essential services formulated and implemented.

Subprogramme 2
Sustainable urban development

11.9 The world is rapidly urbanizing and cities are increasingly becoming both the loci and the engines of economic and social development. Improved urban governance (more effective and sustainable development and management of cities) leads to more effective and efficient responses to urban problems, particularly urban poverty and social exclusion.

Objective

11.10 The objective of the subprogramme is the adoption of socially integrated, inclusive, accessible, transparent, participatory and accountable urban governance and management, at the national and local levels, with a view to ensuring sustainable urban development.

Strategy

11.11 The responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Urban Development Branch. The strategy for achieving these objectives will combine the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, applied research, training, organizational capacity-building and operational activities. The Campaign will serve as an entry point into the rest of the subprogramme, and will link operational and normative activities at all levels and establish norms of good urban governance at the global level. Another element of the strategy is the promotion of the World Charter of Local Self-Government as an international framework for decentralization policies.

Expected accomplishments

11.12 Expected accomplishments would include:

(a) Improved urban governance through participatory city consultations, crime prevention strategies and local leadership capacity-building;

(b) Strengthened knowledge and understanding of urban economics and the interplay between economic, social and legal/regulatory factors that influence and shape urban development and the synergies between urban and rural settlements;

(c) Increased level of preparedness for disaster prevention and response in cities, with special emphasis on community involvement.

Indicators of achievement

11.13 Indicators would include:

(a) Wider participation of citizens, including increased participation by women, in urban management; increased effectiveness, efficiency and transparency in city decision-making, including increased leadership roles for local authorities; and improved accountability for public resources by city managers (verified through feedback from stakeholders

and partners via meetings, workshops and reports, and evaluation of specific programmes/projects);

(b) Municipal-level mechanisms developed to support local economic development, including improvement of municipal finances, investment, urban employment and income generation; and improvement in the implementation and effectiveness of legislative instruments that guide the planning, development and management of cities (verified through reports and feedback from studies, seminars and expert group meetings, and evaluation of selected programmes/projects);

(c) National legislation enacted to facilitate sustainable urban development; development of urban environmental tools for sharing information and expertise among partners; and operational partnerships established by local governments and their institutions with communities and the private sector in environmental planning and management;

(d) Number of cities which received assistance from UNCHS (Habitat) and which responded in a timely and efficient way to disasters which may have occurred.

Legislative mandates

Programme 11
Human settlements

General Assembly resolutions

53/242	Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements
54/209	Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)
54/232	Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

Commission on Human Settlements resolutions

16/22	Cooperation in the eradication of poverty
17/1	Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)
17/7	Revitalization of the Habitat Centre
17/17	International cooperation for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda
17/20	Work programme and budget of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for the biennium 2000-2001
17/22	Cooperation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme

Subprogramme 1
Shelter for all

Commission on Human Settlements resolutions

16/7	The realization of the human right to adequate housing
16/15	Contribution of the private and non-governmental sectors to the delivery of shelter to low-income groups

Subprogramme 2
Sustainable urban development

Commission on Human Settlements resolutions

16/3	Disaster mitigation
17/10	The rural dimension of sustainable urban development